

W. H. CROOK.

JANUARY 28, 1897.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. MINOR, of Wisconsin, from the Committee on Claims, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 1929.]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1929) hereto attached, for the relief of W. H. Crook, having considered the same and the accompanying papers, submit the following report:

This bill, amended to \$4,000 instead of \$6,000, has twice passed the Senate—once April 2, 1884, and once July 8, 1886.

It has been reported on favorably by the Senate committees heretofore—in the Forty-eighth Congress, first session, Report No. 144, by Mr. Cameron, of Wisconsin, and recommending that the bill be amended from \$6,000 to \$4,000, and by Senator Gray, of Delaware, January 13, 1886, Report No. 39, Forty-ninth Congress, first session, which report reads as follows:

[Senate Report No. 39, Forty-ninth Congress, first session.]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (S. 100) for the relief of William H. Crook, having considered the same and accompanying papers, submit the following report:

The committee find the facts to be as stated in Senate Report No. 144, Forty-eighth Congress, first session, which said report is hereto annexed and made a part of this report, and is as follows:

By the act of July 4, 1836 (R. S., sec. 450), Congress authorized the President to appoint a secretary with the title of "secretary to the President to sign land patents," at a salary of \$1,500 per annum. This officer was continued down to 1878, having no other duty imposed upon him except to sign, in the President's name, the patents issued by the Government on the sales and grants of public lands. Under the act above cited this officer, although in name a secretary to the President, was, in fact, and was recognized by the law as, an officer of the Land Department, and during the greater part at least of the period above stated he occupied a room and desk in the General Land Office, having no duties to perform and no place at the Executive Mansion.

By act of June 20, 1878 (20 Stat., p. 183), the appropriation for payment of the salary of this officer was omitted, and the President was directed to designate one of his executive clerks to perform the duty of signing land patents.

Mr. William H. Crook was then, and had been since 1871, an executive clerk, acting as disbursing officer of the Executive Mansion, and also in charge of the reception room. All of these duties he has continued to perform down to the present time. In addition to them he was designated by the President, July 1, 1878, as secretary to sign land patents, and since that time all the patents issued on sales and grants of public lands have passed under his hand.

The number of patents issued since July 1, 1878, has averaged about forty thousand each year and has steadily increased. The labor of the secretary in executing same has been very onerous, each patent having two signatures attached and all

having to be checked off and accounted for. On account of his regular duties at the Executive Mansion Mr. Crook has been compelled to perform most of this extra work of signing patents out of office hours; but, notwithstanding this fact, we are assured that the work has been done more promptly and efficiently than when an officer was charged with the performance of this duty alone. In fact, Mr. Crook has, in addition to the other duties of his position, since July 1, 1878, performed, without compensation in any form, labor for which from 1836 to 1878 the Government paid \$1,500 per annum.

We attach hereto, as exhibits, letters from Hon. J. A. Williamson, late Commissioner of the General Land Office, and Hon. W. K. Rogers, private secretary to President Hayes, both of whom, from their official positions, were familiar with the labor performed by Mr. Crook and the time and manner of its execution.

It seems to your committee that he is in justice and equity entitled to a fair compensation.

WASHINGTON, D. C., September 30, 1881.

SIR: Your note of this date is at hand. I fully agree with you that you should have extra compensation for signing land patents. Before this additional duty was assigned to you the President's secretary to sign land patents was allowed \$1,500 a year for that service, and I think the service was worth the amount. The responsibility of the position, in addition to the clerical labor, is very considerable, and should be paid for. I think you are fully entitled to extra compensation, and sincerely hope that it may be given you.

Very sincerely, yours,

J. A. WILLIAMSON.

Col. W. H. CROOK,
Executive Mansion, City.

WASHINGTON, D. C., November 18, 1881.

DEAR SIR: I entirely agree with you that you should receive extra compensation for signing land patents. During the four years while I was private secretary to the President your regular duties as executive clerk and disbursing officer were sufficient to keep you employed all the time during office hours. The additional service you rendered in signing land patents was necessarily performed out of office hours, the greater part of it night work. Upon the omission by Congress (the act of June 30, 1878) of the usual provision for the salary of the secretary of the President to sign land patents, and the requirement that the President should designate one of the executive clerks to discharge the duties of the office, you were selected by President Hayes because of your familiarity with the work, having temporarily filled the position during the illness of the secretary appointed for the purpose by President Grant. It is a laborious and responsible position, and the work was carefully, diligently, and faithfully preformed. I earnestly trust Congress will allow you full compensation for the service rendered.

Very truly, yours,

W. H. ROGERS.

W. H. CROOK,
Executive Clerk to the President.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, June 26, 1884.

DEAR SIR: It gives me pleasure to say in behalf of Mr. William H. Crook that while in the Senate I had occasion to examine into the merits of his claim for services as secretary to the President to sign land patents, and that I considered it a proper claim and favored it at that time. I think Mr. Crook is justly entitled to the compensation allowed by the bill as it passed the Senate in April last.

Very respectfully,

H. M. TELLER.

Hon. BENTON McMILLIN,
Chairman of the Committee on Claims, House of Representatives.

[Forty-eighth Congress, first session. In the House of Representatives. May 31, 1884.—Ordered to be printed.]

AN ACT for the relief of William H. Crook.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Treasury be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to pay to William H. Crook, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of four thousand dollars, as compensation for services as secretary to the President to sign land patents for the fiscal years of eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, eighteen hundred and eighty, eighteen hundred and eighty-one, and eighteen hundred and eighty-two, inclusive, and which services were additional to his regular duties as executive clerk and disbursing agent, the amount being the same as was formerly paid for such service.

Passed the Senate April 2, 1884.

Attest:

ANSON G. MCCOOK, *Secretary.*

On the foregoing report the following bill was passed (S. 100, Report No. 3697):

AN ACT for the relief of William H. Crook.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Treasury be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to pay to William H. Crook, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of four thousand dollars, as compensation for services as secretary to the President to sign land patents for the fiscal years of eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, eighteen hundred and eighty, eighteen hundred and eighty-one, and eighteen hundred and eighty-two, inclusive, and which services were additional to his regular duties as executive clerk and disbursing agent.

Passed the Senate July 8, 1886.

Attest:

ANSON G. MCCOOK, *Secretary.*

In addition to the above your committee herewith submit a copy of a letter of ex-President Hayes, the original submitted for inspection and comparison, the original letter being with W. H. Crook, the claimant. It is as follows:

FREMONT, OHIO, January 28, 1887.

DEAR SIR: I have your letter asking my opinion of the bill for your relief now pending in the House. You performed faithfully and well double duty after you began to sign land patents. The latter work was done outside of office hours, and you are in fairness entitled to be paid for it. I hope and expect Congress will pass your bill. It is an act of simple justice.

Sincerely,

R. B. HAYES.

W. H. CROOK,
Ex. Mansion.

These services were performed for over four years and nothing has been paid therefor.

Your committee therefore recommend that the bill be passed.

A BILL for the relief of William H. Crook.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Treasury be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to pay to William H. Crook, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of four thousand dollars, as compensation for services as secretary to the President to sign land patents for the fiscal years of eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, eighteen hundred and eighty, eighteen hundred and eighty-one, and eighteen hundred and eighty-two, inclusive, and which services were additional to his regular duties as executive clerk and disbursing agent, the amount being the same as was formerly paid for such service.

